

Publication Report



Support Needs System (SNS) Summary Statistics

as at August 2010

Publication Date- 29 March 2011

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About ISD

Scotland has some of the best health service data in the world combining high quality, consistency, national coverage and the ability to link data to allow patient based analysis and follow up.

Information Services Division (ISD) is a business operating unit of NHS National Services Scotland and has been in existence for over 40 years. We are an essential support service to NHSScotland and the Scottish Government and others, responsive to the needs of NHSScotland as the delivery of health and social care evolves.

Purpose: To deliver effective national and specialist intelligence services to improve the health and wellbeing of people in Scotland.

Mission: Better Information, Better Decisions, Better Health

Vision: To be a valued partner in improving health and wellbeing in Scotland by providing a world class intelligence service.

Official Statistics

Information Services Division (ISD) is the principal and authoritative source of statistics on health and care services in Scotland. ISD is designated by legislation as a producer of 'Official Statistics'. Our official statistics publications are produced to a high professional standard and comply with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. The Code of Practice is produced and monitored by the UK Statistics Authority which is independent of Government. Under the Code of Practice, the format, content and timing of statistics publications are the responsibility of professional staff working within ISD.

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- National Statistics (ie assessed by the UK Statistics Authority as complying with the Code of Practice)
- National Statistics (ie legacy, still to be assessed by the UK Statistics Authority)
- Official Statistics (ie still to be assessed by the UK Statistics Authority)
- other (not Official Statistics)

Further information on ISD's statistics, including compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, and on the UK Statistics Authority, is available on the [ISD website](#).

Introduction

The Support Needs System (SNS) is a sophisticated electronic system that records information about children and young people with additional support needs. Its aim is to monitor their progress and ensure they have access to the services or support they require. The system has now been implemented in twelve of Scotland's NHS Boards, although the level of implementation and utilisation of the system varies across Boards.

Although primarily a highly valued clinical tool, it is possible to extract data for analysis from the SNS. Local analysis has been carried out since implementation and figures for participating NHS Boards have been published annually since December 2005.

A minimum of around two percent of the child population would be expected to be eligible for registration on SNS. In some NHS Boards the proportion of children registered on SNS exceeds two percent and in others a lower proportion of children are registered. This is a reflection of differing implementation and utilisation of the system in each participating Board. In some NHS Board areas, children with more complicated or severe problems are targeted for assessment in SNS, while in other areas children with a wider range of problems are being assessed on the system. A child's details will only be recorded on SNS with the explicit permission of his / her parent(s) or guardian(s). *For these reasons SNS figures cannot be used as direct indications of the prevalence of particular conditions in the wider population and should not be used to make comparisons between NHS Boards.*

These summary statistics are based on mid-August 2010 data and present information for nine NHS Board areas. Data for Fife and Dumfries & Galloway NHS Boards have been excluded from this publication due to very small, unrepresentative numbers.

Key points

- Overall, in the nine participating Boards with data included, 14,405 children and young people had assessment data recorded on SNS.
- 76.8% of all children and young people on SNS had at least one impairment (of any severity) recorded and 26.2% of all children and young people on SNS had at least one severe impairment recorded.
- Of all children and young people on SNS, 97.8% required at least one service (newly identified or ongoing). The most commonly required service type was the involvement of a professional, such as a speech therapist (97.7% of all children on SNS).

Results and Commentary

These summary statistics are based on mid-August 2010 data and present information for nine NHS Board areas (data for two boards with very small numbers of children on the system have been excluded from these statistics). Please see [background information](#) for further details of variations in the implementation of SNS across participating SNS Boards.

Children being assessed on SNS

Table 1: Number of children being assessed in SNS as at August 2010, by NHS Board

NHS Board	Number of children being assessed in SNS
Argyll & Clyde *	3,029
Ayrshire & Arran	1,176
Borders	199
Forth Valley	139
Grampian	4,434
Lanarkshire	1,795
Lothian	2,776
Shetland	32
Tayside	825
ALL SNS Boards **	14,405

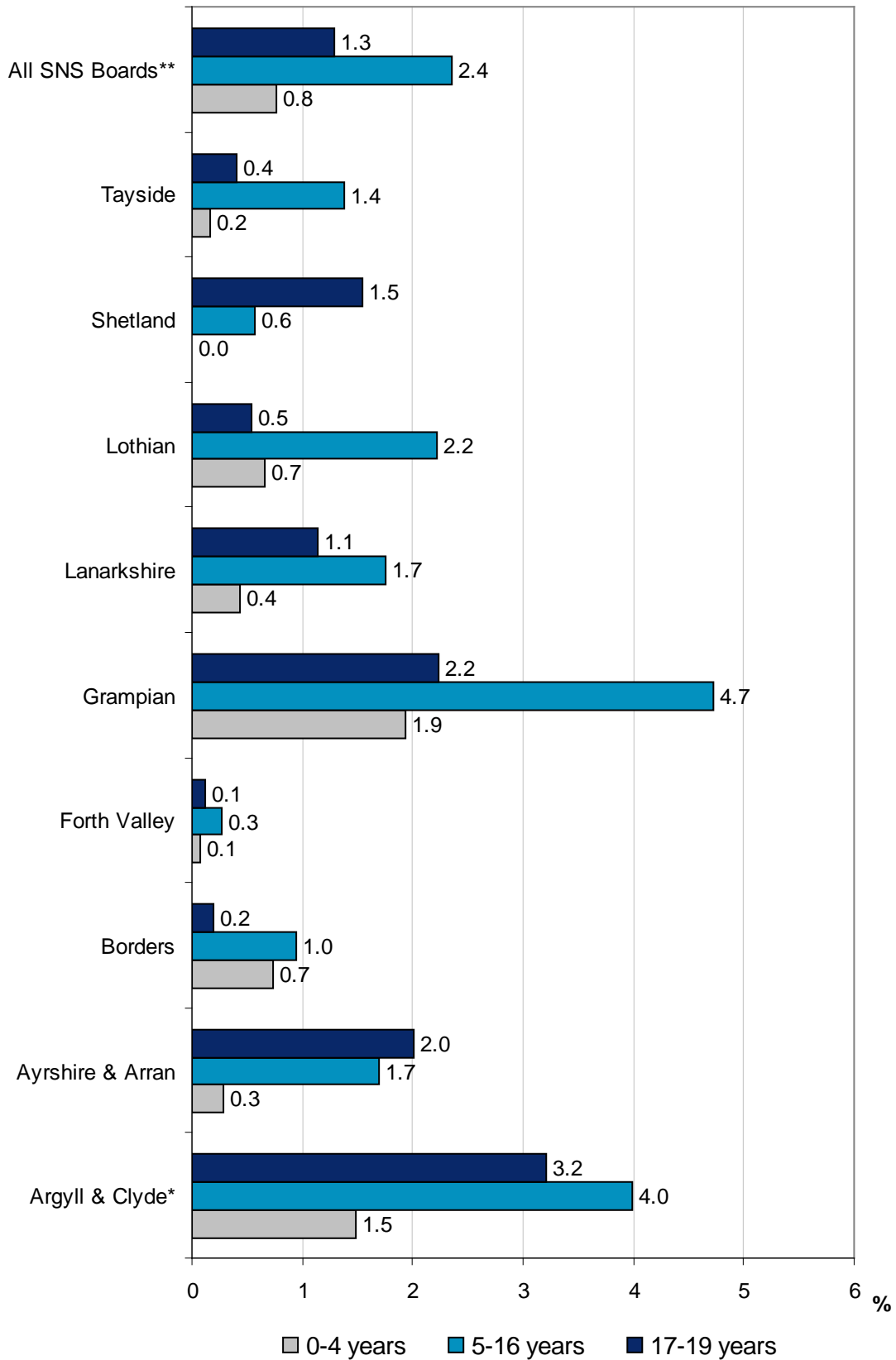
Source: SNS; ISD Scotland; Aug10

* Please see Appendix A1- Background Information

Table 1 shows the number of children being assessed in SNS in each NHS Board. Figure 1 presents these figures, broken down into age groups, as a percentage of the child population in each age group, by NHS Board area. A minimum of around two percent of the total child population would be expected to be eligible for registration on SNS. Figure 1 shows that this is exceeded in some areas, particularly for children of school age, but not reached in other areas.

The different rates of capture shown for each NHS Board are a reflection of differing implementation and utilisation of the system in each NHS Board. In some areas, e.g. NHS Lanarkshire, children with more complicated or severe problems are targeted for assessment in SNS. In other areas e.g. NHS Grampian, children with a wider range of problems are being assessed on the system.

Figure 1: Children assessed in SNS, as a percentage of the child population in each age group, by NHS Board



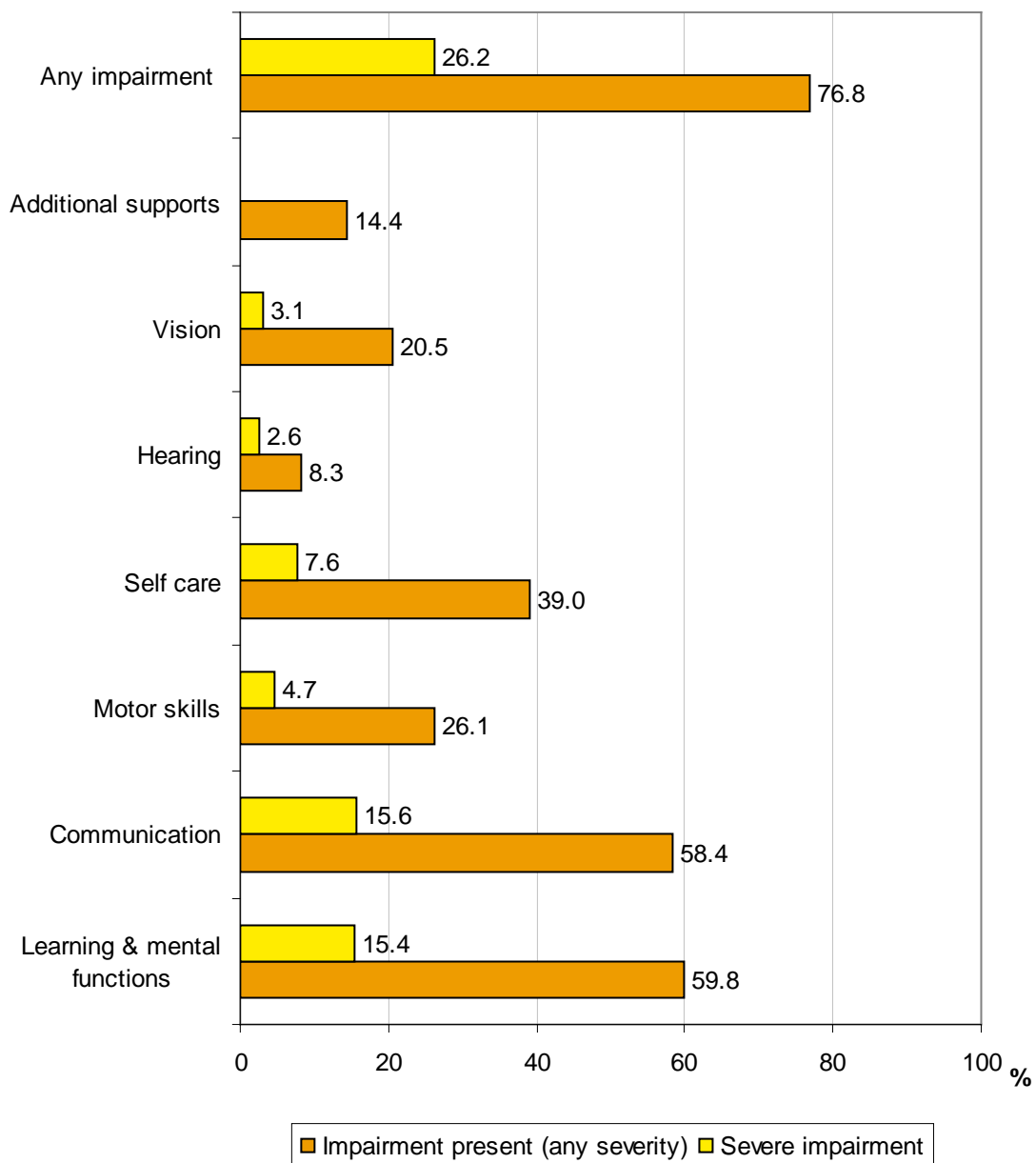
Source: SNS; ISD Scotland; Aug10 & General Register Office Scotland mid 2009 population estimates
 * Please see Appendix A1- Background Information

Impairment recording on SNS

At the end of October 2007, a revised version of the page on the SNS assessment form for recording details of a child's disabilities / impairments came into use. This page can be used to record details of the type and severity of each impairment for each child.

Currently, the impairment data from the revised page will not represent as full a picture of the impairments of children on the system as previously published figures derived from data recorded on the old version of the page. This is because some children will not have been assessed since October 2007 and so will not yet have had impairment details recorded on the revised page.

Figure 2: Impairments (present and severe) as a percentage of children being assessed on SNS

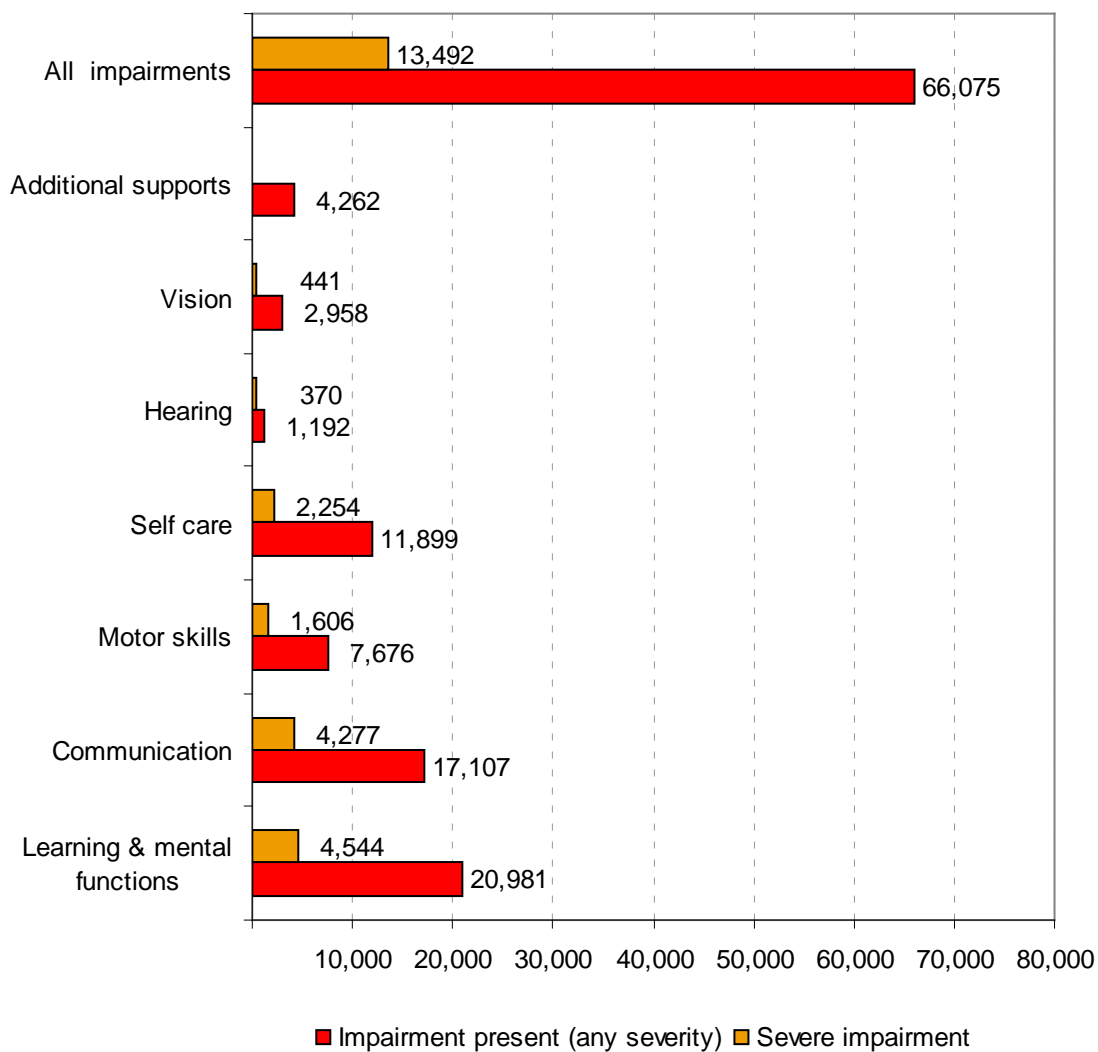


Source: SNS; ISD Scotland; Aug10

Within each of the main impairment categories shown on Figure 2 (except 'Additional supports') there are several more specific sub-types (e.g. 'Feeding', 'Toileting' and 'Dressing' within the 'Self care' category). Each of these impairments can be recorded as being 'Present' or 'Severe'. Severity level is not applicable to 'Additional supports' as this category details whether or not the child requires e.g. respiratory support, renal dialysis or uses e.g. a wheelchair, hearing aids.

Figure 2 shows the proportion of children being assessed on SNS that have at least one impairment (any severity) or severe impairment recorded. 76.8% of children being assessed on SNS have at least one impairment recorded in at least one category, meaning that the remaining 23.2% of children do not have any information on impairment recorded yet or have not been assessed. 'Learning & mental functions' and 'Communication' impairments are the most commonly recorded (59.8% and 58.4% respectively). Of all children on SNS, 26.2% have at least one severe impairment recorded.

Figure 3: Number of recordings of impairment (present and severe)



Source: SNS; ISD Scotland; Aug10

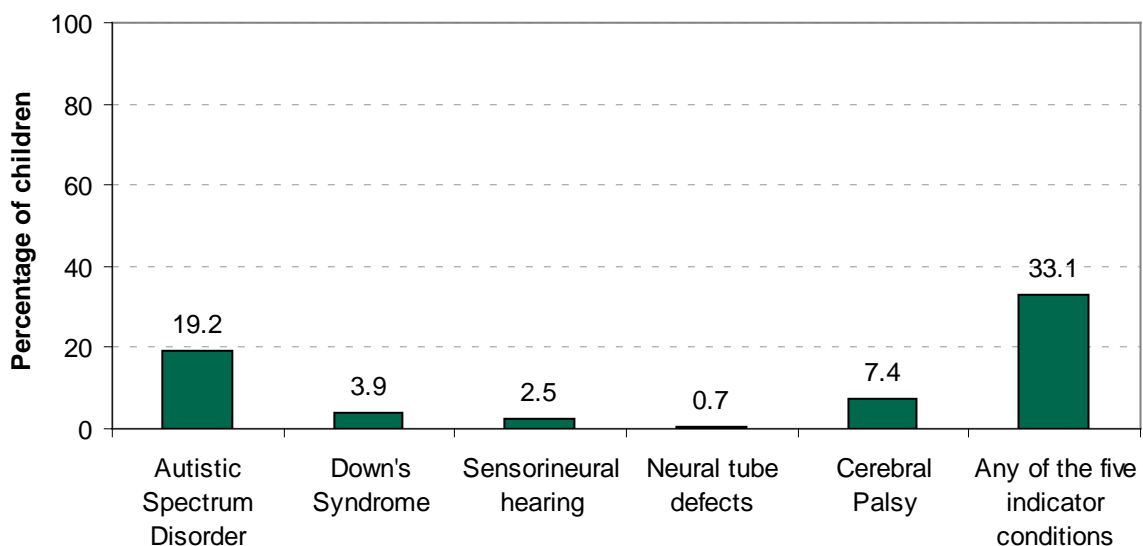
Figure 3 shows the total number of impairment recordings and the number of severe impairment recordings (where applicable) for each category. In total, there were 66,075 impairments recorded and of these, 13,492 were severe impairments. These 66,075 impairment recordings relate to 76.8% of all children on SNS (approx.11,000 children), which illustrates that many children have multiple impairments recorded on the system. The highest proportion of severe impairments is for 'Hearing' (370 of 1,192 records) although this relates to only 2.6% of all children on SNS.

Read code recording on SNS

The conditions and problems of children being assessed in SNS may be recorded using Read coding. Around 5,000 different codes have been entered into SNS to describe conditions or problems. Clinicians using SNS have agreed on groupings of Read codes for certain conditions to be used for recording data on SNS: Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Down's Syndrome, Sensorineural hearing loss, Neural tube defects and Cerebral Palsy. In future, Read code groupings may be developed for other conditions.

Figure 4 shows the percentage of all children on SNS who have selected indicator conditions recorded. One third (33.1%) of all children on SNS have at least one of these indicator conditions recorded, while some children may have more than one recorded. The remaining 66.9% of children on SNS have other Read coded problems, impairments or service requirements. **Please note that these five indicator conditions are not necessarily recorded on SNS more extensively than other Read code problems and Read code data on SNS cannot be used to infer the prevalence of conditions in the general population.**

Figure 4: Selected indicator conditions, as a percentage of all children on SNS



Source: SNS; ISD Scotland; Aug10

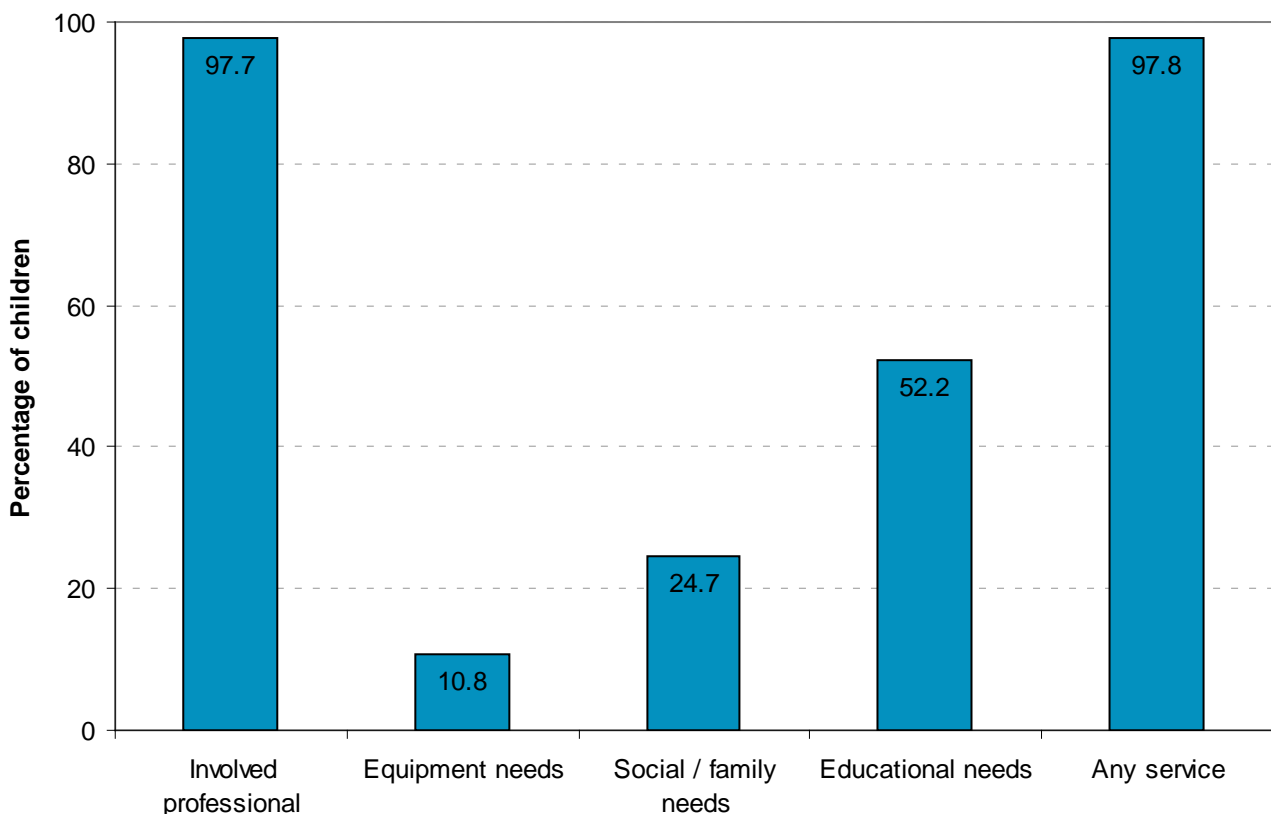
Service recording on SNS

A revised version of the page of the SNS assessment form used to record service requirements came into use at the end of March 2009. This page can be used to record the type of service required and information on the availability of services.

There are over 130 individual service codes that may be recorded on SNS and these services are grouped into four main categories (involved professional, equipment needs, social / family needs and educational needs). Some children may be assessed on SNS over a period of many years and their service requirements may change during that time.

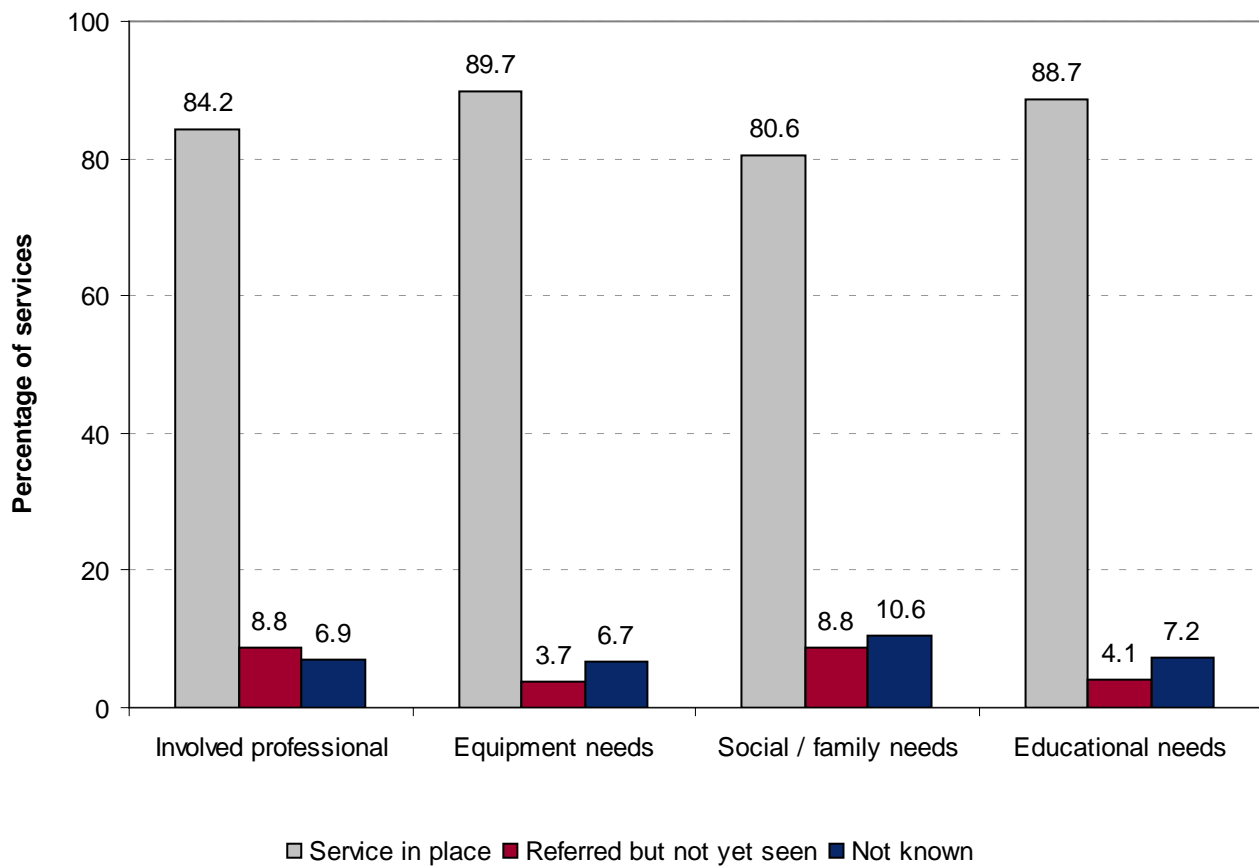
Figures 5 and 6 contain figures relating to overall service requirement (newly identified and ongoing service requirements) for children on SNS. Figure 5 shows that most children on SNS (97.8%) have at least one service requirement recorded. The vast majority of children on SNS (97.7%) required support from at least one professional e.g. a speech therapist. Many children have multiple service requirements and may need services from more than one category.

Figure 5: Children with at least one service requirement, as a percentage of all children on SNS



Source: SNS; ISD Scotland; Aug10

Figure 6: Service availability, as a percentage of services required



Source: SNS; ISD Scotland; Aug10

For each service category, Figure 6 shows the percentage of required services that are known to be in place, and the percentage where the referral has been made or the service availability is not known. In the most commonly required service category, involvement of a professional, 84.2% of services are in place. The least required service category, equipment needs, has the highest percentage in place (89.7%). The lowest percentage of services known to be in place (80.6%) is for social / family needs.

Glossary

SNS

Support Needs System

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Further Information

Further information can be found on the [ISD website](#).

Appendix

A1 – Background Information

Details for each user NHS Board as at mid-August 2010 are given below:

NHS Board (using SNS)	Year of implementation	Other notes on implementation
Argyll & Clyde*	1993	SNS has been consistently used. Argyll & Clyde ceased to exist on 31st March 2006 and the administration area was split into two sub-areas that now fall under the administration of NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde and NHS Highland. However, since neither of the former NHS Boards Greater Glasgow or Highland used the system as at mid-August 2010, SNS figures for the former Argyll & Clyde area have been presented as before. Note: implementation of the system to cover all of the NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde Board area began in late August 2010.
Ayrshire & Arran	2001	In general, SNS has been consistently used.
Borders	2000	In general, SNS has been consistently used.
Dumfries & Galloway	2001	Use of SNS is very limited and there are currently very few records on the system.
Fife	2004 (relaunched in 2008)	There are currently very few records on the system.
Forth Valley	2007	Implementation began in July 2007.
Grampian	1996	SNS has been consistently and extensively used.
Lanarkshire	2001	SNS is consistently used but staff shortages and staggered implementation have reduced overall registrations.
Lothian	2002	In general, SNS has been consistently used.
Shetland	1994	The use of SNS has been hindered since Shetland has no lead Paediatrician.
Tayside	1997	In general, SNS has been consistently used.

****All SNS Boards:** NHS Fife and NHS Dumfries & Galloway have very small, unrepresentative numbers of children registered on SNS. Data for these children, and those registered under more than one NHS Board, are excluded.

Particular care should be taken when viewing figures for individual NHS Boards that are based on small numbers e.g. Shetland, as these can give an unrepresentative picture of activity in that NHS Board. SNS holds data for a subgroup of children identified as requiring sustained support over and above that routinely given to all children, and their data will only be recorded on SNS with the explicit permission of their parents / carers. For these reasons, SNS figures cannot be used as direct indications of the prevalence of particular conditions in the general population and should not be used to compare NHS Boards.

SNS has not been implemented in all NHS Boards across Scotland. NHS Orkney, NHS Western Isles and the majority of NHS Highland use alternate electronic or paper systems to manage the care of children and young people with support needs in their areas.

A revised version of the page on the SNS assessment form used to record service requirements came into use in March 2009. This is the second publication to include service statistics produced from the revised page. The figures in this publication relate to overall service requirement (newly identified and ongoing service requirement) and so are not comparable with those in the December 2008 publication, which related only to those service requirements identified at most recent assessment. The service availability categories in this publication are also different from those in the December 2008 publication.

Some children and young people on the system have not yet been assessed using the revised impairment/disability page on the assessment form, which came into effect in October 2007. Therefore the impairment statistics in this publication will not represent as full a picture of the impairments of children on the system as previously published figures derived from the old disability page.

A2 – Publication Metadata (including revisions details)

Metadata Indicator	Description
Publication Title	SNS Summary Statistics
Description	Support Needs System (SNS) Annual Summary Statistics, as at August 2010
Theme	Health and Social Care
Topic	Child Health
Format	PDF
Data source(s)	Support Needs System (SNS)
Date that data is acquired	25 August 2010
Release date	29 March 2011
Frequency	Annual
Timeframe of data and timeliness	Data as at August 2010
Continuity of data	See Appendix A1- Background Information
Revisions Statement	The data are not subject to planned revisions.
Revisions relevant to this publication	None
Concepts and definitions	Further information can be found on the ISD website .
Relevance and key uses of the statistics	Making information publicly available on implementation and utilisation of the system. Figures are compared to previous years' figures and expected trends.
Accuracy	Figures are compared to previous years' figures and expected trends.
Completeness	See Appendix A1- Background Information
Comparability	See Appendix A1- Background Information
Accessibility	It is the policy of ISD Scotland to make its web sites and products accessible according to published guidelines .
Coherence and clarity	Information is available as a PDF document.
Value type and unit of measure	Numbers and percentages.
Disclosure	Low risk of disclosure; no disclosure methods were employed
Official Statistics designation	Official Statistics
UK Statistics Authority Assessment	Not currently put forward for assessment
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A3 – Early Access details (including Pre-Release Access)

Pre-Release Access

Under terms of the "Pre-Release Access to Official Statistics (Scotland) Order 2008", ISD are obliged to publish information on those receiving Pre-Release Access ("Pre-Release Access" refers to statistics in their final form prior to publication). The standard maximum Pre-Release Access is five working days. Shown below are details of those receiving standard Pre-Release Access and, separately, those receiving extended Pre-Release Access.

Standard Pre-Release Access:

Scottish Government Health Department

NHS Board Chief Executives

NHS Board Communication leads

Extended Pre-Release Access

Extended Pre-Release Access of 8 working days is given to a small number of named individuals in the Scottish Government Health Department (Analytical Services Division). This Pre-Release Access is for the sole purpose of enabling that department to gain an understanding of the statistics prior to briefing others in Scottish Government (during the period of standard Pre-Release Access).

These statistics will also have been made available to those who needed access to help quality assure the publication:

Representatives of the Support Needs System National User Group